

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 03711 050823Z  
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2201

S E C R E T AMMAN 3711

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, MASS, MOPS, JO, US  
SUBJECT: TALK WITH KING--DOMESTIC REFORM AND RELATED MATTERS

1. I USED OPPORTUNITY OF TALK JULY 3  
WITH KING TO RAISE WITH HIM SUBJECT WHICH HE HAD  
MENTIONED TO ME SOME MONTHS AGO OF DOMESTIC  
REORGANIZATION.

2. KING SAID HE HAD RECENTLY BEEN GIVING THIS  
MORE THOUGHT AND HAD BEEN DOING A LOT OF TRAVELLING  
IN THE COUNTRY. HE HOPED TO TRY TO FORM A ROYAL  
COMMISSION TO DEVELOP MORE COHERENT POLICIES IN  
THE ECONOMIC AREA. HE CITED AS AN EXAMPLE  
SEVERAL DECISIONS WHICH GOVERNMENT HAD RECENTLY MADE (I.E.,  
TO RAISE POWER COSTS TO LOCAL INDUSTRIES) WHICH  
DID NOT SEEM TO BE WELL THOUGHT THROUGH. HE  
ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT OF THE IDEA.

2. I TOLD HIM FRANKLY THAT WE HAD GAINED THE  
IMPRESSION FROM OUR CONTACTS IN THE COUNTRY  
THAT SOME STREAMLINING AND REORGANIZATION WAS  
NECESSARY. A ROYAL COMMISSION TO LOOK AT A  
BROAD RANGE OF ECONOMIC ISSUES--PRICES AND  
WAGES, GOVERNMENT WORKING CONDITIONS, ETC.--

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SEEMED TO ME PERSONALLY A GOOD IDEA. I  
ENCOURAGED HIM ALSO TO LOOK AT THE CIVIL  
SERVICE WHICH WAS LARGE FOR A COUNTRY THE SIZE  
OF JORDAN AND HAD BEEN USED FOR SOCIAL WELFARE  
PURPOSES WHEN UNEMPLOYMENT HAD BEEN  
RAMPANT IN THE PAST. NOW JOBS WERE MUCH EASIER  
TO GET AND PERHAPS A SLOW ATTRITION IN THE CIVIL

SERVICE WOULD HELP IMPROVE EFFICIENCY.

3. THE KING NOTED THAT HE WAS STILL CONCERNED WITH THE FUNCTIONING OF AQABA PORT. KING WANTED TO CENTRALIZE FURTHER ADMINISTRATION OF THE PORT AND IMPROVE THE SECURITY SITUATION. THERE WERE STILL TOO MANY SEPARATE MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN AQABA SECURITY WITH NO COORDINATED IDEA OF WHAT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO DO.

4. THE KING MENTIONED TO ME THAT THERE WAS STILL A LOT OF GRUMBLING AND UNHAPPINESS IN THE MILITARY. I TOLD HIM THAT WAS ALSO MY IMPRESSION. HE SAID IT WAS NOW TIME FOR THE MILITARY TO CHANGE THEIR POLICY OF NOT IMPROVING SOLDIERS' HOUSING WHILE ENTIRE NEW MILITARY CAMPS WERE BEING BUILT. SOME INTERIM STEPS TO IMPROVE SOLDIERS' QUARTERS SHOULD BE TAKEN. ANOTHER BAD AREA IN THE MILITARY WAS PROMOTIONS. THE ARMY HAD CARRIED AUTOMATIC PROMOTIONS TOO FAR AND HE PERSONALLY HAD BEEN LAX OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS IN NOT SITTING IN, AS HE USED TO, WITH ARMY PROMOTION BOARDS. IT WAS ALRIGHT HAVING AUTOMATIC PROMOTIONS UP TO MAJOR. AFTER THAT SOME RECOGNITION OF MERIT AND COMPETENCE WAS REQUIRED TO BE INTRODUCED IN ORDER TO RECOGNIZE EARLY AND PROMOTE OUTSTANDING OFFICERS.

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I SAID THAT THIS WAS AN ANALYSIS WHICH WE ALSO SHARED AND THAT WE HAD BEEN ASKED AND WOULD COOPERATE WITH HIS MILITARY MANPOWER PEOPLE IN PROVIDING SOME SUGGESTIONS ON A MORE MERIT-ORIENTED PROMOTION SYSTEM. I ALSO SAID WE WERE READY TO ASSIST IN THE ECONOMIC AREA, IN REORGANIZATION AND POLICY ADVICE, IN ANY WAY HE WISHED.

5. I ASKED HIM IF HE FELT THERE HAD BEEN A CONSCIOUS POLICY TO ACHIEVE SOME SORT OF TRIBAL BALANCE IN MILITARY PROMOTIONS. HE SAID WITHOUT HESITATION HE DID NOT THINK SO, THAT WHILE AUTOMATIC PROMOTIONS MIGHT SERVE THIS PURPOSE, HE WAS NOT WORRIED OR CONCERNED ON THIS SCORE BY THE MERIT PROMOTION SYSTEM IN THE ARMY.

6. THE KING ALSO SAID THAT RECENTLY HE HAD RE-EXAMINED THE QUESTION OF HEAVY-LIFT HELICOPTERS FOR THE MILITARY. HE WAS NOW MORE INTERESTED IN EVENTUALLY REPLACING JORDAN'S PRESENT LIGHT HELICOPTER FLEET WITH SOMETHING LIKE THE SIKORSKY TEN-PASSENGER HELICOPTERS WHICH HE

HAD RECENTLY SEEN IN THE U.S. SIKORSKY WAS GOING TO MAKE HIM AN OFFER FOR A DOZEN OF THESE AND INDICATED THE PRICE COULD BE LOW BECAUSE JORDAN COULD GET INTO AN OPENING IN THE PRESENT PRODUCTION LINE. THE KING SAID HE WAS INTERESTED BUT WOULD WANT TO SEE THE PRICE. I ASKED THE KING WHERE THE MONEY WAS COMING FROM. HE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW, BUT IF THE ARRANGEMENT MADE SENSE HE WOULD BE WILLING TO CANVASS SOME FRIENDS FOR IT. HE CLEARLY RECOGNIZED THIS WAS SOMETHING HE WOULD HAVE TO FIND THE FUNDS FOR.

7. WE SWITCHED SUBJECTS BRIEFLY AND I BROUGHT THE KING UP TO DATE ON OUR MAQARIN DAM CONSULTA-  
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TIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS. I TOLD HIM IN EFFECT THAT WE WERE NOT OVER ALL HURDLES NOR WAS I SURE THAT THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT HAD FULLY FOCUSED ON THE QUESTION, BUT THAT UP UNTIL NOW THINGS HAD GONE QUITE WELL. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY TRUE IN CONNECTION WITH DISCUSSIONS OF THE ALLOCATION OF YARMOUK WATER AND CONSTRUCTION OF A DIVERSION WEIR WHICH BOTH SIDES SEEMED TO WANT.

8. FINALLY, AT THE END OF OUR MEETING I MENTIONED THE IMPENDING ARRIVAL OF SENATOR JAVITS AND SUBSEQUENTLY OF CODEL HAMILTON. THE KING SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING SENATOR JAVITS AGAIN, BUT WANTED ME TO KNOW THAT HE DISAGREED STRONGLY WITH JAVITS' RECENT SPEECH AND WAS PREPARING HIMSELF TO TELL JAVITS SO DIRECTLY.  
PICKERING

SECRET

NNN

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